

Wise Birding Holidays

Bird and mammal watching tours



MONGOLIA: Birds & Mammals Tour 2

Thursday 29th August - Wednesday 11th September 2019

6 Wise Birding Clients

Leaders: Chris Townend with Tselmeg Tumendelger

HIGHLIGHTS OF TRIP

Snow Leopard: The undoubted highlight of the tour was watching a magnificent animal for over five hours at a distance of just 300M!

Pallas's Cat: Two different encounters, both during the day with three cats seen. Two animals together one morning and a large male seen well one evening.

Pallas's Sandgrouse: A fantastic spectacle with thousands of birds seen and heard on a number of days and often flying overhead as we scanned for cats!

Wolf: Two different encounters with three animals seen. All sightings were recorded during the day and for a prolonged period of time.

Schrenck's Bittern: Surprise find of the tour as we were birding a migrant area in Dalanzadgad. Only the 5th record for Mongolia!

Swan Goose: Great to see at least 40 of these beautiful Geese at Lun wetland. The species is now classed as vulnerable on a global scale.



Snow Leopard and thousands of Pallas's Sandgrouse were just two of the tour highlights

Tour Summary

Mongolia is a country of vast open space and very few people with a population of only 3 million. Mongolia is fairly straight forward to visit with regular flights from London via Moscow and a flight time of just 6 hours from Moscow. The scenery is varied and mesmerising with vast steppe land, incredible mountains, golden sand dunes, stony desert and lush grassland and lakes. This tour was focused on trying to see Snow Leopard and Pallas's Cat as well as other key mammals, but at the same time the itinerary covered a good variety of habitats to ensure as many of Mongolia's iconic birds were also seen. Mongolia in late July and August is generally dry and has comfortable temperatures for camping and searching for wildlife. Though not the best time of year for birding, it is still possible to see the majority of specialities and often migrants too. All just a short walk from the comfort of our Toyota Land Cruisers.

This tour recorded 161 species of bird, 31 mammals and 6 reptiles.

Thur 29 August: ULAANBAATAR (UB) - MANDALGOBI - DALANZADGAD (DZ)

On arrival into Ulaanbaatar airport we were relieved to find all our bags had arrived so we enjoyed some much needed coffee and breakfast at the airport. Numerous Red-billed Choughs flying overhead were the first birds that greeted us as we loaded the luggage into our vehicles and headed on the long journey south. A couple of birding stops were made en route before lunch at Mandalgobi and then we continued the final leg of our journey to Dalanzadgad.

Highlights during the journey today included Upland Buzzard, Steppe Eagle, Cinereous Vulture and a single Mongolian Gull. A stop at a roadside pool revealed a good mix of waders including an impressive group of 100+ Black-tailed Godwits, 2 juvenile Red-necked Phalaropes and Ruff as well as a few Citrine Wagtails. The first mammal of the tour was Brandt's Vole and many were seen during the journey. After lunch the bird of the day was certainly Pallas's Sandgrouse, as numerous groups of these beautiful birds continually flew over the road and adjacent Steppe. By the time we reached our hotel in Dalanzadgad the total count had reached at least 500 birds.

Fri 30 August: DZ PARK/PLANTATION & WETLAND - BEAUTIFUL MOUNTAINS

This morning we did some birding around the parks and migrant traps of Dalanzadgad and it soon became apparent that migration was in full swing! After lunch in DZ we visited a local wetland and then headed off-road to our base camp located in the Beautiful Mountains. Once settled into camp we took a short walk and spent the last couple of hours scanning from our wonderfully scenic mountain viewpoint for cats. After dinner, we did some spotlighting on foot around base camp.

The clear highlight today was witnessing an assortment of migrants in and around the town of Dalanzadgad. Wing-barred *Phylloscopus* warblers featured heavily with Hume's, Two-barred, Greenish and Arctic Warblers seen during the morning. Dusky Warblers were common and a moulting male Daurian Redstart posed nicely in the park for everyone. A visit to the nearby plantation was very exciting, particularly finding a Schrenck's Bittern! We saw the bird a couple of times on the ground and in flight to confirm the identification of this very rare vagrant for Mongolia. Red-throated Flycatchers were very common and a single Asian Brown Flycatcher was also seen. Adult male and juvenile Pallas's Buntings and two Yellow-breasted Buntings were also one of the day's highlights. A visit to the DZ wetland produced a few waders including Temminck's Stint as well as more Citrine Wagtails and a couple of Crested Larks.

Once at base camp we walked to a viewpoint behind our Gers and watched from around 5pm until 7.30pm. Here, we saw the first Bearded Vultures and Golden Eagles of the tour as well as Isabelline Wheatears and White-winged Snowfinches. New mammal species around base camp included Pallas's Pika, at least a dozen Siberian Ibex, plus a Siberian Jerboa and Mongolian Silver Vole during a night walk.

Sat 31 August: BEAUTIFUL MOUNTAINS BASE CAMP - SNOW LEOPARD DAY!

This morning we met early for coffee and biscuits and then walked from base camp to our viewpoint where we watched from around 6.45am until 09.30am. We had a good panoramic view across top quality Snow Leopard habitat and the mountains we could view were all in the hub of regular Snow Leopard sightings. The whole area was being monitored in real time by a number of trail cameras by way of photos being delivered to our local guide's mobile phone!

Despite much scanning we were unsuccessful with any cat sightings, though the sight of 2,000+ Mongolian Gazelles grazing on the Steppe far in the distance was certainly impressive. We returned to camp for breakfast and then took some rest before lunch. However, at around 12.30pm everyone had an excited knock on their Ger door as we received news from the local herders, they had found two Snow Leopards!! We quickly gathered our optics and cameras and waterproofs and headed off in our Land Cruisers. After a 30 minute drive we were met by the herders who then guided us to the nearest accessible point for our vehicles, before we were forced to walk. We started our ascent to the near ridge, only to find that on reaching the near ridge, we then needed to access another ridge beyond that! We took it slow and the adrenaline certainly helped us, as we could clearly see one of the herders on the ridge scoping the Snow Leopards! We finally all arrived at the ridge top. We stayed low, so as not to break the skyline and we all carefully peered through the numerous telescopes. It was a wonderful sight to watch a sleepy yawning Snow Leopard in full view at just 300 metres range - Simply WOW! After a couple of minutes, the Snow Leopard stretched and began heading down the ridge where it settled to a more concealed spot in the shade. At this moment, some of the group saw a second cat briefly that disappeared!

We spent the rest of the afternoon simply enjoying the views of this beautiful cat as we watched through our telescopes. It slept and rolled around, then watched us quite intently, then changed position and flicked its tail, slept some more and then watched us some more. Those piercing pale green eyes will certainly never be forgotten! We even had our lunch brought to us by the wonderful local herders as we savoured our beautiful mountain viewpoint until dusk. Finally, we had to drag ourselves away from the cat as it still remained in situ. We spotlighted back to camp, but things were quiet except for a Pallas's Cat that was seen crossing the road by one of the herders. We spent some time looking for it, but we had to make do with, just a one cat day! Back at camp we enjoyed a celebratory meal, raised a glass to the Snow Leopard and dreamed of the wonderful memories of the grey ghost!

Sun 01 September: BEAUTIFUL MOUNTAINS BASE CAMP - KHOSHUU LAKE

We met for breakfast and then headed out in our vehicles to explore Khoshuu Lake and the surrounding area until lunch. We then had time to relax, have showers and spend time birding around the camp or taking photos of the numerous distractions. Isabelline Wheatears, Horned Larks and both Gerbil species were now becoming a daily feature. During the late afternoon and evening we spent some time scanning a different mountain area where a Snow Leopard family had been seen on numerous occasions over the last few weeks.

Highlights around the lake included a good selection of wildfowl with a lone Whooper Swan plus numerous Ruddy Shelduck and Red-crested Pochard. Other notable species included four Demoiselle Cranes, Slavonian Grebe, two Long-toed Stints and a juvenile Curlew Sandpiper. Pallid Ground Squirrel was seen particularly well near the lake and a dead Pintail Snipe, though sad, allowed us to see the plumage detail of this tricky to id species. Our first Hill Pigeons of the trip were seen at the nearby village along with Isabelline Shrike, Red-throated Flycatcher and Olive-backed Pipit. No cats were seen during our evening watch at the new viewpoint, but Sandgrouse flocks continued to fly overhead and the day count was an impressive 1,200 birds.

Mon 02 September: BEAUTIFUL MOUNTAINS BASE CAMP

After our usual early morning coffee and biscuits, once again we walked up to our viewpoint behind base camp and watched from around 7am until 09.30am where we finally found our other cat target species, the beautiful Pallas's Cat.

We then returned for breakfast and travelled by vehicle to explore a new valley where we found Snow Leopard tracks and signs including urine markings known locally as "boomba". During the afternoon we returned to watch the mountain where the Snow Leopard family sightings had been seen on a number of occasions. We watched from around 5pm until 7.30pm, but no Snow Leopard sightings. After dinner we did some spotlighting close to base camp and found a fantastic Marbled Polecat!

The highlights of today were both mammals! Firstly two wonderful Pallas's Cats watched from our base camp viewpoint during the morning. The animals were at a distance of around 2Km, but the views were surprisingly good in a telescope with a lot of detail visible due to the fantastic light. These were presumably the same animals seen during our previous July/August tour. We watched them for a good 30 minutes or so and at one point the Pallas's Cat was sat just metres from a perched Golden Eagle! The other mammal highlight was during the spotlighting session where we had excellent views of a Marbled Polecat. It played hide and seek with us for around 30 minutes and then it eventually bounded off into the tall grasses to hunt. Bird highlights today included many species that were now becoming daily sightings. Flocks of White-winged Snowfinch and Mongolian Finch, Rock Sparrow and the odd Brown Accentor. Four adult Golden Eagles, two Eurasian Wryneck, two male Lesser Kestrel and a very striking pale grey Common Kestrel. A Little Owl near base camp and yet more impressive counts of Pallas's Sandgrouse. Large flocks flew overhead totalling 2,500 for the day! A beautiful Haly's Pit Viper was the reptile highlight.

Tues 03 September: BEAUTIFUL MOUNTAINS BASE CAMP

After our usual early morning coffee and biscuits, we drove to a different valley in an attempt to get a little closer to the location of the Pallas's Cats that we found the previous morning. We arrived shortly after sunrise at 6.45am and after a short but steep hike(!) we were in position and scanned the area until around 09.00am. We then did some birding in the bottom of the valley before travelling by vehicle to another valley where we hoped to find a roosting Eagle Owl. During our late afternoon and evening session we returned to the valley where we had found Snow Leopard tracks from the previous day and we scanned this area until dusk. We then returned to base camp and enjoyed a great evening with the local herders with compulsory beer and Vodka as we raised a glass to Team Snow Leopard!

The clear highlights of the day were once again, both mammals! Great views of a single Wolf and three Argali at our beautifully scenic evening viewpoint. The Wolf showed very well and gave great scope views at a range of just 600M. It was unconcerned by our presence and it was still present as we left the site at dusk. Bird highlights today included a group of 15 Hill Pigeon roosting on a crag, at least two Common Cuckoos and the now expected three Vulture species soaring overhead.

Migrants included another Eurasian Wryneck and a Hoopoe, Eurasian Hobby and more Dusky Warblers and Red-throated Flycatchers. Whilst scanning for Pallas's Cats, Brown Accentors gave good views and a single Mongolian Accentor was new for the tour. Impressive flocks of up to 150+ White-winged Snowfinches and 20+ Twite were certainly memorable and the Pallas's Sandgrouse count was only 40 birds today.

Weds 04 September: BEAUTIFUL MOUNTAINS BASE CAMP

After breakfast we travelled in our vehicles to a higher altitude where a lush green valley produced numerous birds and small mammals. We had a picnic lunch in a very productive gorge where numerous migrant birds and specialities were seen well. Our late afternoon session was very exciting as we watched from a new and incredibly scenic mountain viewpoint looking towards the famous Yol Valley. Here we scanned the mountain slopes for a couple of hours and were rewarded by yet another sighting of a Pallas's Cat. We also enjoyed more great views of a group of Argali just below us.

There were many bird highlights today which included excellent views of around 20 Brown and five Mongolian Accentors, often side by side. Groups of Small Snowfinch totalling around 70 birds, family groups of Blyth's Pipits and at least four Beautiful Rosefinch. Migrants included a lone Bluethroat, at least 12 Dusky Warblers, two Arctic Warblers, 30+ Red-throated Flycatchers and 12+ Olive-backed Pipits. Alashan Ground Squirrel was the new mammal species for the day but the Pallas's Cat was clearly the mammal highlight. We watched a large male staring at us from behind a rock for around 30 minutes before it felt safe to move into the open. We then watched it walking and scent marking from around 5.30pm until just before 7pm at a range of only 600 metres. A fantastic end to the day!

Thur 05 September: CHANDMANI LAKE - NARAN SPRING - KHONGOR DUNES

Today it was time for a change as we headed west in our convoy of Toyota Land Cruisers. First to the small town of Bayandalai, then across the dusty Steppe and on to the impressive Khongor Sand Dunes and finally, our Ger Camp at Gobi Erdene. After dinner, we took a spotlighting session from around 8pm until 10pm.

Highlights today were all about the journey and the impressive changing landscape, but of course we saw many new birds and mammals too! There were a number of memorable birds today and the sheer numbers of Pallas's Sandgrouse was one of the highlights. The sight of thousands of birds coming to drink at Chandmani Lake was quite incredible and the total count for the day was a minimum of 5,500 birds! Other bird highlights included great views of at least three Mongolian Ground-Jays, Desert Wheatears, Pied Wheatears and our first "Steppe" Grey Shrike of the trip. A Sandplover species seen only in flight at the lake evaded identification to species, whereas a male Great Spotted Woodpecker was the surprise bird of the day, found in some isolated trees at the Naran Spring in the semi-desert! In the same patch of trees and small arable fields we found a migrant Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler and a group of eight Common Rosefinch.

Mammal highlights were equally impressive today with the true speciality of the region being a group of 12 Mongolian Wild Ass including some young foals. Our first sighting of the beautiful Goitered Gazelle was equally impressive with at least 50 animals seen well. During our spotlighting session we saw a good variety of species including Siberian Jerboa and Northern Three-toed Jerboa, Desert Hamster, Tolai Hare and Corsac Fox. However, it was the Long-eared Hedgehog that was the real highlight!

Fri 06 September: KHONGOR RIVER - SAXAUL FOREST - BASE CAMP

This morning, we met at a more civilised breakfast time and there was a clear change in the weather with overcast and cool conditions. After breakfast we headed down to the Khongor River and did some birding before the weather turned and the rain started! We returned to our accommodation for lunch and then headed back to base camp. During the journey, we received some exciting news from one of the trail cameras near our camp that showed a Snow Leopard was present! Our drivers then gave us an exciting off-road journey as our speed increased and we arrived at the area within an hour of the sighting. Unfortunately, the weather deteriorated and despite trying for a while, we soon decided to head back to base camp to dry out!

Highlights today were less due to the weather though we still managed to find the key target bird of the day. Good views of three Saxaul Sparrows including a dapper male. A Chinese Grey Shrike was a new bird for the tour and a couple of Snipe by the Khongor River showed well enough to obtain photos and confirm the suspected identification as Pintail Snipe. Perhaps, one of the best birds of the day was seeing no less than three migrant Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers, one of which gave fantastic scope views as it sat in some damp vegetation. Two Great Gerbils were a new mammal for the trip and Siberian Toad was the first and only amphibian of the trip.

Sat 07 September: BASE CAMP - DZ PLANTATION

Today was our final morning at base camp and everyone was keen to make the most of our final scanning session behind base camp. As usual, we met for coffee and biscuits and it soon became apparent that the temperature was much colder due to the wind, but we braved it regardless! We watched from around 06.30am until 10am in the hope that the Snow Leopard caught on the trail camera from the previous day was still in the area. Later, we enjoyed a much needed warm breakfast and we then explored the Steppe by vehicles and visited a valley in the hope of seeing Eagle Owl. After a final lunch at base camp we savoured the last views of our camp before it was dismantled. We then travelled to DZ and spent the last couple of hours birding in the Plantation before returning to our hotel where the "indoor" showers were welcomed!

The morning sighting of two Wolves was certainly a welcome reward after braving the cold wind! We enjoyed good scope views as both animals were watched on and off for 30 minutes from 07.45am. They were at a range of around 1,500M and allowed us to see some interaction between the two animals. Bird highlights near base camp included a good count of 40 Hill Pigeons, but it was the Eurasian Eagle Owl roosting in a gorge that was the star bird of the morning. An impressive herd of 400+ Mongolia Gazelles on the Steppe was equally exciting to see.

Back in DZ migrants were once again evident around the Plantation with Yellow-browed Warbler, Hume's Leaf-Warbler, Arctic and Greenish Warblers plus Asian Brown Flycatcher. New birds for the trip included a dark morph Booted Eagle, Oriental Turtle Doves, a group of five Eyebrowed Thrushes and a Eurasian Golden Oriole. The Oriole being the most notable for the region.

Sun 08 September: DALANZADGAD - ULAANBAATAR TUUL RIVER

Today we were all prepared for the long journey back to UB and though mostly a travel day, we still managed to squeeze in birding at the start and end of the day. Before breakfast, some of the group spent 45 minutes birding the small park near our hotel and then after breakfast, we packed our vehicles and headed north. We arrived back in Ulaanbaatar by early evening and checked into our hotel beside the Tuul River where we just had enough light for some birding.

Highlights in the park included a similar selection of warblers and flycatchers from the previous day. A male Daurian Redstart was also seen, though the star bird of the morning was a first year male Siberian Thrush seen just after dawn by Martyn and Daniel. Birds en route to UB were as expected with the usual Upland Buzzards and Steppe Eagles as well as groups of Pallas's Sandgrouse for company. As we neared UB Black Kites began to appear and three Amur Falcons were new for the tour. Once at the Tuul River we did well to find a number of specialties including a family group of Azure Tit, Asian Azure-winged Magpies and a group of six Mandarin Duck. Prior to dusk we saw a couple of Amur Falcons and enjoyed an impressive display of 100+ Daurian Jackdaws gathering to roost.

Mon 09 September: TUUL RIVER - HUN LAKE - LUN WETLAND - HUSTAI NP

This morning most of the group took a pre-breakfast walk along the Tuul River and we then set off towards Hustai NP. En route we visited the Hun Lake close to our hotel which produced a good selection of wildfowl. We then headed west to the Lun wetland where we had coffee and doughnuts and some very productive birding. We enjoyed a picnic lunch at the wetland and then re-traced our steps back east and arrived in good time to explore Hustai NP. At dusk we headed to our Ger camp on the edge of the Hustai NP and after dinner, with special permission, we returned to the park and did some spotlighting on foot.

Today was one of the best days for new species with some real quality birds and mammals! Memorable highlights included a male Lesser Spotted Woodpecker that showed very well beside the Tuul River shortly followed by a good selection of ducks at Hun Lake, plus Whooper Swans and Black Storks. En route to Lun we found an impressive flock of at least 150 Mongolian Larks and an equally impressive gathering of 85 Demoiselle Cranes beside the road, clearly showing that birds were focused on migrating. It was great to see so many Hen Harriers and all were ringtails. Odd birds hunted the roadside fields and others hunted the Lun wetland. Three very distinctive Eastern Marsh Harriers were also present at Lun. The wetland was packed with birds and we enjoyed a good few hours birding the area where other highlights included, White-cheeked Starling, at least 30 Bar-headed Geese, a few Greylag Goose and at least 40 beautiful Swan Geese, now classed as vulnerable. White-naped Cranes were certainly a memorable part of the day as we counted six birds dotted around the wetland and 500+ Eurasian Spoonbills was also quite a spectacle!

In Hustai NP, the highlights turned more to mammals, though Meadow Bunting and Brown Shrike were very welcome additions to the bird trip list and we had some wonderful views of Amur Falcons hawking for insects. New mammals appeared thick and fast with many opportunities to see the amusing Siberian Marmots, Long-tailed Ground-Squirrel, Red Deer and of course the wonderful Przewalski's Horses of which we counted at least 55 animals. Our night visit produced excellent views of Corsac Foxes in the spotlight and a Daurian Hedgehog thanks to Anita's thermal scope!

Tues 10 September: HUSTAI NP - TUUL RIVER - MANZUSHIR FOREST

This morning we had a little time to explore the habitat around our camp and visit the tourist shop before we returning to our hotel by the Tuul River. Here, we spent our time birding until lunch and then headed to the Manzushir Forest for the afternoon.

Memorable birds today included a good count of 17 Mandarin Ducks on the Tuul River as well as four beautiful Daurian Redstarts. In the Manzushir Forest, the birding was very different to any habitat we had previously experienced and it made a fitting end to the tour. New birds here included, Eurasian Jay and Eurasian Nuthatch, Willow Tit, Common Crossbill and a female/immature Pine Bunting. However, it was the female Siberian Rubythroat and the two Northern Nutcrackers that won best birds of the day.

Of course, despite being our last day, we still managed to find some new mammals! Siberian Chipmunk and Eurasian Red Squirrels gave some great views and were the final new mammal species for the tour.

Wed 11 September: AIRPORT TRANSFER

As with most flights out of Ulaanbaatar, they depart early so we met at 04.30hrs for the 15 minute transfer to the airport where the tour concluded.



We spent many hours scanning the Beautiful Mountains



The incredible camouflage of a Snow Leopard!



Base Camp



Pallas's Sandgrouse were a real spectacle as we enjoyed fabulous views on many occasions and a day count of over 5,000 birds!





**A lone Mongolian Lark (above) was unusual as most birds we saw were in large flocks
Mongolian Ground-Jay (below) was seen well in the Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park**





**Brown Accentor (above) was regularly seen near base camp
Kozlov's Accentor (below) is Mongolia's only true endemic bird**





**Himalayan Griffon Vulture (above) and Cinereous Vulture (below)
were seen regularly whilst scanning for cats**





Brown Shrike (above)
Chinese Grey Shrike (below)





Prime Snow Leopard habitat and our first view of the Grey Ghost!





We watched this beautiful Snow Leopard for over five hours at just 300 metres range
Stills from digiscoped video (Tselmeg Tumendelger)
Full Video can be seen [HERE](#)





We watched this beautiful Snow Leopard for over five hours at just 300 metres range
Stills from digiscoped video (Tselmeg Tumendelger)
Full Video can be seen [HERE](#)





**The Beautiful Mountains of South Gobi region (above)
The Khongor Sand Dunes in the Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park (below)**





Multi-ocellated Racerunner (above) and Toad-headed Agama (below)





Haly's Pit Viper (above) and Mongolian Gerbil (below)





**Migration was in full swing during our tour and passerines included:
Arctic Warbler (above) and Asian Brown Flycatcher (below)**





**Birding in Mongolia is always exciting with many surprises!
The Eurasian Golden Oriole (above) is a rare bird in the Gobi Region
Finding the female Schrenck's Bittern (below) in Dalanzadgad was
only the fifth record for the country (Bittern photo: Martyn Sidwell)**





**Other migrants included:
Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler (above)
and Olive-backed Pipit (below)**





This large male Pallas's Cat gave us all great scope views
Stills from digiscoped video (Tselmeg Tumendelger)
Full Video can be seen [HERE](#)





**Alashan Ground Squirrels (above) prefer high mountain foothills and meadows
The larger Pallid Ground Squirrel (below) prefers lower Steppe habitat**





**Brandt's Vole was commonly seen when between UB and DZ (above)
Mongolian Silver Vole was seen in the mountains (below)**





Long-tailed Ground Squirrel (above)
and Gobi Jerboa (below)





**Black-tailed or Goitered Gazelle (above) in the Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park
Marbled Polecat (below) was seen well near our base camp**





**Yaks (above) and Pallas's Pika (below)
Both seen daily near our base camp**





The Lun wetland and river system was a magnet for waterbirds





Swan Geese are classed as Vulnerable and were seen in good numbers at the Lun wetland





**Eurasian Eagle Owl (above) at its day roost site
Mongolian Wild Ass (below) in the Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park**





Male and female Amur Falcons were seen very well in Hustai NP and along the Tuul River





Migrant Daurian Redstarts were seen on a number of occasions





**Pallas's Bunting (above) and Yellow-breasted Bunting (below)
were both seen near Dalanzadgad
(YB Bunting photo: Martyn Sidwell)**



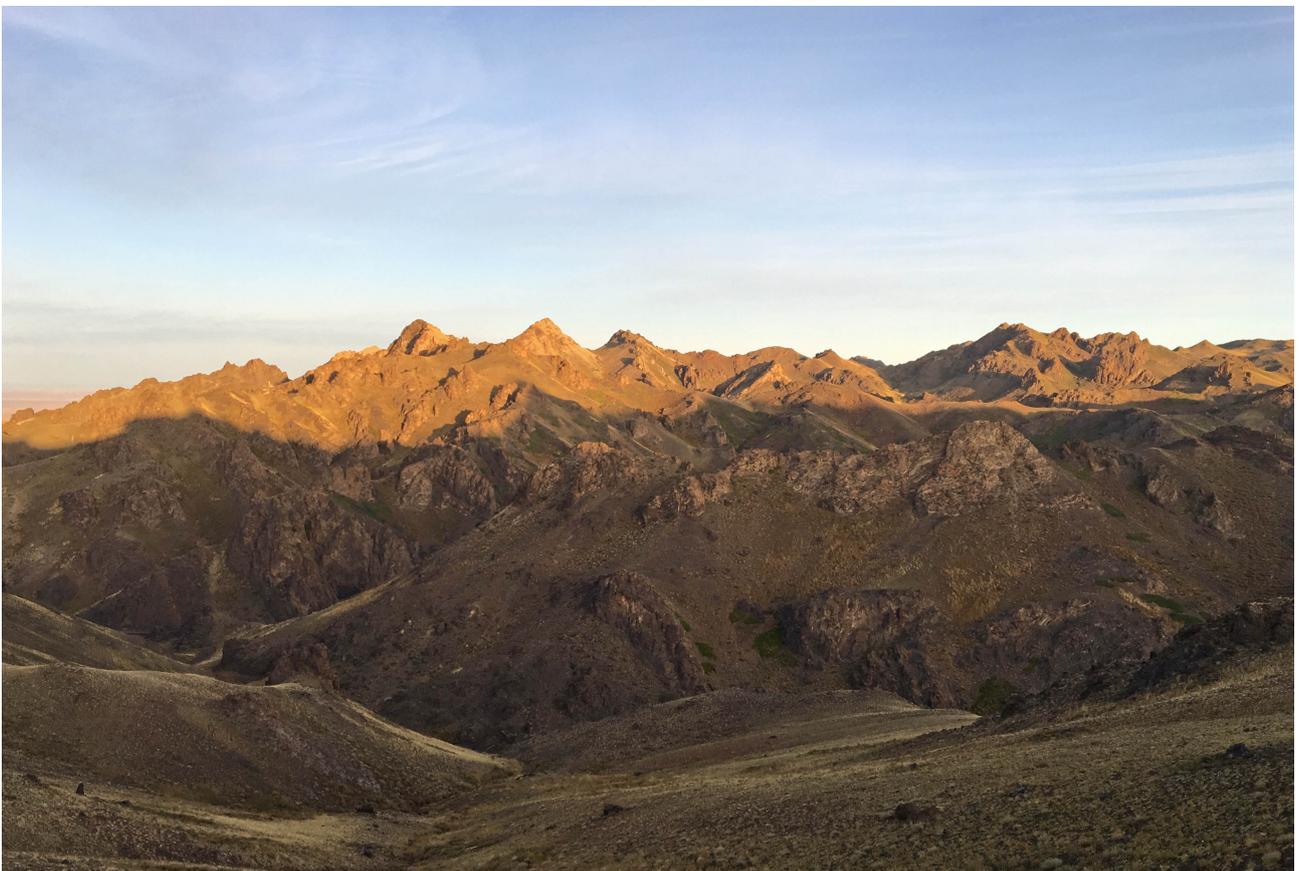


Male Pied Wheatear (above) and Male Small Snowfinch (below)
(Both photos: Martyn Sidwell)





Upland Buzzard and the Beautiful Mountains





Juvenile “Eastern” Black-tailed Godwit (above) and Long-toed Stint (below)





**Male Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (above)
The Tuul River by our hotel (below)**





Przewalski's Horses in Hustai NP





Manzushir Forest was the only place we saw Northern Nutcracker





The beautiful Snow Leopard on 31st August 2019





Scanning for cats (by Martyn Sidwell)
Our group at Manzushir





Snow Leopard sleeping beauty!

More photos from our tours can be viewed on our Flickr site:
www.flickr.com/photos/129663578@N06/albums

Conservation Donation – Following this tour to Mongolia £300 was transferred to the Wise Birding Holiday's central conservation fund.

Once a target amount has been reached this money will be used to support one single project in the hope of achieving more for species conservation. Currently this amounts to around £7,000. Some tours will continue to donate money to help some of the smaller projects that we feel will still benefit from smaller donations.

Please visit our [Conservation News](#) & [Latest News](#) links to find out more.

Wise Birding Holidays Ltd

3, Moormead, Budleigh Salterton, DEVON, EX9 6QA

Website: www.wisebirding.co.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/wisebirdingholidays
Email: chris@wisebirding.co.uk
Telephone: 07973 483227

Wise Birding Holidays

Bird and mammal watching tours



MONGOLIA: Bird, Mammal & Reptile Checklist for 29th August - 10th September 2019

The bird list follows the nomenclature and classification from HBW Alive, del Hoyo, J, Elliott, A et al and the Mammals & Reptiles checklist follows IUCN taxonomy

#	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	#	SPECIES NOTES
1	Chukar	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>	1	Seen and heard whilst scanning for cats and recorded on three days.
2	Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	2	One at Khoshuu lake on the 1st and 8 birds at Hun lake on the 9th.
3	Bar-headed Goose	<i>Anser indicus</i>	3	A small group of 30 birds were present at the Lun wetland on the 9th.
4	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	4	At least 6 birds were recorded at the Lun wetland on the 9th. These were presumed to be the <i>rubrirostris</i> subsp. known as Eatsern Greylag Goose .
5	Swan Goose	<i>Anser cygnoid</i>	5	Some great views of at least 40 birds at the Lun wetland on the 9th.
6	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	6	Small groups recorded on two days.
7	Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>	7	Recorded along the Tuul River on the 9th with a count of 8 birds.
8	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	8	Recorded on five days with counts of 2 - 20 birds and a high count of 80+ birds at the Lun wetlands.
9	Mandarin Duck	<i>Aix galericulata</i>	9	Recorded on the Tuul River with 6 birds on the 8th and then 17 birds on the 10th including adult males and female/imm birds.
10	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>	10	A group of 11 birds at Khoshuu lake on the 1st were the only birds recorded. A mix of females/imm and eclipse male birds.
11	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	11	A count of 50+ birds at Khoshuu lake on the 1st and then smaller numbers at Hun lake on the 9th.
12	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	12	Recorded at Hun lake only on the 9th.
13	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	13	A group of 20+ birds at Chandmani lake on the 5th whilst watching drinking Pallas's Sandgrouse and again at Hun lake on the 9th.
14	Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>	14	The only sighting was of 2 birds at Hun lake on the 9th.
15	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	15	Small numbers recorded on four days.
16	Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	16	A single bird at Hun lake on the 9th.
17	Common Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	17	Recorded on three days with the highest count being 30+ birds on a pool en route to Dalanzadgad on our first day.
18	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	18	Small numbers at Hun lake on the 9th were the only birds recorded.
19	Horned Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>	19	The only bird was at Khoshuu lake on the 1st.
20	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	20	A commonly encountered species throughout the tour with birds recorded on 11 days from the mountains to the desert.
21	Hill Pigeon	<i>Columba rupestris</i>	21	Small groups of 2 - 40 birds seen on four days. The highest count was of 40+ birds near base camp on the 7th.
22	Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>	22	A single bird on the 30th at the Dalanzadgad plantation, with 4 birds there on the 7th and then a single bird at Manzushir Forest on the 10th.
23	Eurasian Collared-dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	23	Small groups recorded on five days.
24	Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopella senegalensis</i>	24	Andy saw a single bird at the DZ plantation on the 5th.
25	Pallas's Sandgrouse	<i>Syrrhaptes paradoxus</i>	25	Fantastic views and impressive numbers and certainly one of the highlights of the tour. Seen on eight days with counts ranging from 40 birds to 5,500! On six days counts were in excess of 500 birds and on three days counts topped 1,000 birds. Minimum counts of 1,200, 2,500 and 5,500 on the 1st, 2nd and 5th of September. The count of 5,500 birds included incredible views of thousands coming to drink at Lake Chandmani.
26	Pacific Swift	<i>Apus pacificus</i>	26	Very few sightings with most birds from the previous tour having clearly moved on. Counts of 2 birds on the 29th and the 31st and then a single bird on the 7th.
27	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	27	Recorded on four days with counts of 1-2 birds.
28	Common Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	28	At least 2 birds at Khoshuu lake on the 1st and then 50+ birds at the Lun wetland on the 9th.
29	White-naped Crane	<i>Antigone vipio</i>	29	These beautiful Cranes were seen at the Lun wetland where 6 birds were present.
30	Demoiselle Crane	<i>Anthropoides virgo</i>	30	Less common than the previous tour with birds clearly gathering in flocks and moving on. Four birds were present at Khoshuu lake and then a flock of 85 birds was seen en route to Lun on the 9th.
31	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	31	A total count of 12 birds on the 9th with birds seen at Hun lake and the Lun wetland.
32	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	32	Recorded on four days with an impressive count of 500+ birds at the Lun wetland on the 9th.

#	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	#	SPECIES NOTES
33	Schrenck's Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus eurhythmus</i>	33	The biggest surprise of the trip! A bird was flushed from rank vegetation at the DZ plantation on the 30th. It was seen in flight and on the ground on two occasions and thanks to Martyn, it was also photographed. The photos suggest it to be a female and it would appear to be only the 5th record for Mongolia. It is normally found in E China, Korea and Japan and winters mainly in Malay Peninsula, Sulawesi and the Philippines.
34	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	34	Recorded on four days including a count 17 birds flying along the Tuul River on the evening of the 8th.
35	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	35	Small numbers recorded on five days with the largest count being 30+ birds along the Tuul River on the 8th.
36	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	36	A count of 12 birds at Chandmani lake on the 5th was the only sighting of the tour.
37	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	37	Small numbers at Khoshuu lake on the 1st including some juvenile birds.
38	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	38	Counts of 1-2 birds on four days.
39	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	39	Recorded at Khoshuu lake on the 1st and at Chandmani lake on the 5th.
40	Greater/Lesser Sandplover	<i>Charadrius sp.</i>	40	A Sandplover species was seen in flight only at Chandmani lake on the 5th and therefore not identified to species.
41	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	41	A single bird on the 6th by the Khongor River and then a group of 25+ birds including juveniles was recorded at the Lun wetland on the 9th.
42	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	42	A bird was heard calling on the 10th.
43	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	43	A single bird on the Khongor River on the 6th, followed by 8 birds at the Lun wetland on the 9th.
44	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	44	At least 100 birds on a pool en route to Dalanzadgad on our first day, followed by 2 juveniles at the Dalanzadgad wetland the following day. Subsp. melanuroides Eastern Black-tailed Godwit migrates through Mongolia.
45	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	45	A single bird at the Dalanzadgad wetland on the 30th.
46	Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	46	A single bird on a pool en route to Dalanzadgad on our first day and 2 birds at Khoshuu lake on the 1st.
47	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>	47	Six birds on a pool en route to Dalanzadgad on our first day.
48	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	48	A juvenile was at Khoshuu lake on the 1st.
49	Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	49	Counts of 1-4 birds over four days.
50	Long-toed Stint	<i>Calidris subminuta</i>	50	At least 2 birds gave excellent views at Khoshuu lake on the 1st.
51	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	51	At least 2 birds on a pool en route to Dalanzadgad on our first day.
52	Pintail Snipe	<i>Gallinago stenura</i>	52	A dead bird was found at Khoshuu lake on the 1st. At least 1 bird was seen well enough by the Khongor River on the 6th to confirm the identification.
53	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	53	At least 2 birds on a pool en route to Dalanzadgad on our first day.
54	Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	54	Two juveniles were seen feeding on a pool en route to Dalanzadgad on our first day.
55	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	55	Counts of 1-2 birds were recorded over five days.
56	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	56	Counts of 1-2 birds were recorded over seven days.
57	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	57	A total of 6 birds at the Lun wetland on the 9th.
58	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	58	Two birds at Khoshuu lake on the 1st and a single bird at Chandmani lake on the 5th.
59	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	59	Recorded on five days with a count of 12+ birds at Khoshuu lake on the 1st.
60	Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	60	Two birds on Khoshuu lake on the 1st, 15 birds at Chandmani lake on the 5th and 12 birds at Hun lake/Lun wetland on the 9th.
61	Mongolian Gull	<i>Larus mongolicus</i>	61	Single birds were recorded on two days whilst travelling between UB and DZ and the return journey, Two birds were also recorded at the Lun wetland on the 9th.
62	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	62	Recorded on four days with singles seen on the 1st and the 2nd and then heard on two days.
63	Eurasian Eagle-owl	<i>Bubo bubo</i>	63	Great views of an adult bird during the day on the 7th near base camp.
64	Bearded Vulture	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	64	Fabulous to see so regularly with counts of 1-8 birds including adults and immatures on seven days.
65	Himalayan Griffon	<i>Gyps himalayensis</i>	65	Small numbers recorded on six days with a max. day count of 20+ birds on the 3rd.
66	Cinereous Vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>	66	Recorded on 11 days. Mostly counts of 1-10 birds except for the first day when we recorded over 20 birds. Some birds were seen sitting on nests still on the 4th.

#	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	#	SPECIES NOTES
67	Steppe Eagle	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>	67	Recorded on six days, including distinctive juvenile birds showing the pale band across the centre of the underwing. Mostly counts of 1-5 birds except for the first day when 10 birds were seen.
68	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	68	Some excellent views over seven days, particularly whilst scanning for cats. Typical day counts were of 1-4 birds including both adult and immature birds.
69	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	69	Single birds seen on the 30th, the 7th, the 9th and the 10th. Both light and dark morphs were recorded.
70	Eastern Marsh-harrier	<i>Circus spilonotus</i>	70	At least 3 birds were seen well around the Lun wetland on the 9th and Martyn saw a bird at Hustai NP on the morning of the 10th.
71	Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	71	Great to see at least 5 birds on the 9th and all were ringtails. A number of birds were seen whilst travelling as well as birds hunting at the Lun wetland.
72	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	72	Counts of 1-2 birds on five days, often whilst scanning for cats.
73	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	73	Recorded on seven days. The highest count was 150+ birds on two separate days, whilst travelling from DZ to UB on the 8th and travelling to Lun on the 9th. Subsp. lineatus: Black-eared Kite.
74	Upland Buzzard	<i>Buteo hemilasius</i>	74	This very common raptor was recorded every day except one and included the distinctive dark morph plumage seen on two days.
75	Common Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	75	Single birds recorded on four days.
76	Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	76	Two birds on the 2nd and a single bird seen very well on the 3rd. All birds were presumed migrants and seen whilst travelling to the various Snow Leopard viewing areas.
77	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates minor</i>	77	A lovely male posed for us along the edge of the Tuul River on the 9th.
78	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	78	A male bird was at Naran Spring in the Gobi and an odd place to find one! Another bird was seen in more typical habitat at Manzushir Forest on the 10th and a bird was heard at DZ plantation also.
79	Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	79	Two males were seen on the 2nd near base camp.
80	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	80	Counts of 2-3 birds were recorded daily including an extremely striking pale grey bird near base camp.
81	Amur Falcon	<i>Falco amurensis</i>	81	First recorded on the outskirts of DZ whilst travelling (3 birds) and then near the Tuul River on the 8th when 4 birds were recorded near dusk. Another 3 birds were recorded the following day and then at least 12 birds seen very well on wires around the Tuul River on the evening of the 10th.
82	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	82	A single bird on the 3rd near base camp and then another seen well on the approach road to Hustai NP on the morning of the 10th.
83	Saker Falcon	<i>Falco cherrug</i>	83	This common falcon was recorded on eight days with typical day counts of 2 birds.
84	Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	84	A single female/imm bird in the DZ Plantation on the evening of the 7th was a rare record for the South Gobi region.
85	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>	85	Recorded in Hustai NP during the late afternoon of the 9th and then 2 birds along the Tuul River on the 10th.
86	Isabelline Shrike	<i>Lanius isabellinus</i>	86	Counts of 1-3 birds on five days of the subsp. isabellinus also known as Daurian Isabelline Shrike
87	Chinese Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius sphenocercus</i>	87	This obviously large grey shrike with a long tail was seen very well on the 6th. First in the Khongor Dunes and then sat on wires whilst travelling from Bayandalai to base camp.
88	Great Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	88	Single birds on the 5th and 6th whilst exploring the Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park. Subsp. pallidirostris Steppe Grey Shrike.
89	Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	89	Recorded on 10 days with a max. day count of 200+ birds whilst travelling from DZ to UB on the 8th.
90	Asian Azure-winged Magpie	<i>Cyanopica cyanus</i>	90	At least 8 birds were seen well near our hotel by the Tuul River on the 8th.
91	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	91	A total of 3 birds at Manzushir Forest on the 10th
92	Mongolian Ground-jay	<i>Podoces hendersoni</i>	92	Excellent views between Bayandalai and Khongor Sand Dunes on the 5th with 3 birds recorded. Alternative name: Henderson's Ground-jay
93	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	93	Recorded on five days mostly near UB and the Tuul River.
94	Northern Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>	94	Two birds were great to see during our visit to the Manzushir Forest on the 10th.
95	Daurian Jackdaw	<i>Corvus dauricus</i>	95	Recorded on three days between the 8th - 10th around the Tuul River. The largest count was of an impressive roost of 100+ birds seen from our hotel at dusk on the 8th.
96	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	96	Recorded on three days mostly near the Tuul River. Subsp. pastinator Eastern Rook.
97	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	97	Recorded daily.
98	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	98	Recorded on three days mostly near UB. Subsp. orientalis larger stouter bill than nominate form.
99	Willow Tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>	99	Two birds were heard calling and seen at the Manzushir Forest on the 10th. Subsp. baicalensis
100	Azure Tit	<i>Cyanistes cyanus</i>	100	A family party of 8 birds were seen by the Tuul River on the evening of the 8th.
101	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	101	A number of family groups were recorded on the 8th-10th.
102	White-crowned Penduline-tit	<i>Remiz coronatus</i>	102	Frustratingly only heard flying over near the Tuul River on the 10th.

#	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	#	SPECIES NOTES
103	Lesser Short-toed Lark	<i>Alaudala rufescens</i>	103	Recorded on six days often being flushed whilst travelling across the Steppe, though with patience a number of birds were seen well. Subsp. cheleensis Asian Short-toed Lark.
104	Mongolian Lark	<i>Melanocorypha mongolica</i>	104	This impressive and striking lark was seen gathering in large flocks with counts of 150+ on the 9th and 50+ on the 10th in fields east of the Hustai NP approach road.
105	Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	106	A very common lark, particularly around base camp and recorded on 12 days. Subsp. brandti Steppe Horned Lark.
106	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	107	The only sightings were of 2 birds at the Dalanzadgad wetland on the 30th and a single bird on the 8th whilst travelling from DZ to UB.
107	Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella certhiola</i>	108	A migrant flushed from a small arable field at Naran Spring on the 5th was later seen well in small trees nearby. Then 3 birds by the Khongor River the following day included one bird that sat in the open for a few minutes and gave great scope views.
108	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	109	Recorded on four days, mostly small counts of 5-10 birds and then at least 200 birds on wires near Lun on the 9th. Some birds were of the very smart <i>tytleri</i> subsp. with deep chestnut underparts.
109	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	110	Recorded on six days, mostly in the Beautiful Mountains whilst scanning for cats.
110	Collared Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	111	The only sighting was at the Lun wetland on the 9th where around 12 birds were recorded.
111	Yellow-browed Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>	112	Migrants were recorded on at least two days in suitable habitat around Dalanzadgad and also at Manzushir Forest.
112	Hume's Leaf-warbler	<i>Phylloscopus humei</i>	113	Migrants were recorded on five days, with birds seen on three days and heard on two days. Mostly single birds except for the 30th when 3 birds were seen in DZ Park.
113	Dusky Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>	114	The commonest migrant warbler of the tour with birds seen and heard in any suitable bit of vaguely vegetated habitat from the mountains to the desert. Recorded on 11 days with at least 30 birds recorded on the 30th in DZ Park.
114	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	115	A bright juvenile bird was seen in the Dalanzadgad Planation on the morning of the 30th. Quite a scarce bird in Mongolia.
115	Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>	116	Single birds in DZ Park and Plantation on the 30th and the 7th.
116	Two-barred Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus</i>	117	Migrant birds were recorded on three days around DZ in the Park or the Plantation. Though only single birds recorded, more birds were thought to be present, but obtaining good enough views to confidently id was often quite difficult with so many other wing-barred Phylloscopus warblers present in the same area!
117	Arctic Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>	118	Counts of 1-2 migrants were recorded on five days, mostly around the DZ park and plantation but also in vegetated valleys in the mountains too. Heard calling on a number of occasions too, a distinctive "zit" quite unlike other Phylloscopus warblers.
118	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	119	A single bird in DZ park on the morning of the 30th.
119	Common Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	120	A single bird in one of the vegetated valleys in the Beautiful Mountains. The subsp. icterops is distinctly grey looking also called Eastern Greater Whitethroat.
120	Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	121	Recorded only along the Tuul River and the Manzushir Forest on the 10th. Very white underparts.
121	White-cheeked Starling	<i>Spodiopsar cineraceus</i>	122	A small group of 5 birds were seen in flight from our high viewpoint overlooking the Lun wetland on the 9th.
122	Siberian Thrush	<i>Geokichla sibirica</i>	123	Martyn and Daniel saw a bird well in DZ park early morning on the 8th. Thought to be a first year male.
123	Eyebrowed Thrush	<i>Turdus obscurus</i>	124	A group of 5 birds in DZ Plantation on the evening of the 7th were very shy but seen on a number of occasions often calling in flight, very similar call to Redwing.
124	Asian Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	125	Single migrants present in DZ Plantation on the 30th and the 8th and 2 birds present on the 7th.
125	Bluethroat	<i>Cyanecula svecica</i>	126	A female/imm bird seen briefly on a number of occasions as it flew between patches of vegetation in the Beautiful Mountains on the 4th
126	Siberian Rubythroat	<i>Calliope calliope</i>	127	A female bird was unintentionally flushed from rocky cover in the Manzushir Forest and then showed well on the ground beneath a large pine tree.
127	Red-throated Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula albicilla</i>	128	A very common migrant recorded on eight days in any suitable cover from the mountains to the desert. High counts of 50+ birds in DZ plantation on the 30th and at least 30 birds in one of the vegetated valleys in the Beautiful Mountains.
128	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	129	These very smart "Eastern" birds were recorded on six days and were particularly common around the base camp area.
129	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	130	A single bird recorded on the 7th was the only sighting.
130	Daurian Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus auroreus</i>	131	This very smart Redstart was recorded on four days. Singles at DZ Plantation on the 30th and the 8th, a bird in the Beautiful Mountains on the 4th and 4 birds (2m, 2f) beside the Tuul River on the 10th.
131	Common Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>	132	Counts of 1-2 birds on four days at DZ Plantation on the 30th and then around the Beautiful Mountains. All birds appeared to be of the subsp. maurus Eastern Stonechat.
132	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	133	Small numbers recorded on three days.
133	Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	134	A very common Wheatear, particularly around base camp, recorded on nine days, including numerous family groups.
134	Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>	135	Counts of 2-6 birds recorded on four days.
135	Pied Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>	136	Recorded on five days including some very smart males with counts of 1-2 birds, mostly in the rocky areas.

#	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	#	SPECIES NOTES
136	Brown Accentor	<i>Prunella fulvescens</i>	137	Some great views of this very attractive Accentor on four days with a count of 20 birds on the 4th.
137	Mongolian Accentor	<i>Prunella koslowi</i>	138	Mongolia's only true endemic bird. A single bird on the 3rd and 5 birds showed very well with Brown Accentors on the 4th. Alternative name: Kozlov's Accentor
138	Saxaul Sparrow	<i>Passer ammodendri</i>	139	A total of 3 birds including at least 1 male were watched near the Khongor River on the morning of the 6th.
139	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	140	Recorded on six days.
140	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	141	A very common species in Mongolia and recorded on nine days. A particularly large flock of 150+ birds near the Lun wetland.
141	Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>	142	Seen only whilst scanning for cats with counts of 12 on the 31st and 8 birds on the 2nd.
142	White-winged Snowfinch	<i>Montifringilla nivalis</i>	143	Recorded on seven days and particularly common around base camp and the Beautiful Mountains. Impressive flocks starting to gather with groups of 50 to 300+ birds.
143	Small Snowfinch	<i>Pyrgilauda davidiana</i>	144	Birds beginning to flock with 70+ birds on the 4th in the Beautiful Mountains and groups of 50+ and 30+ on the 9th/10th at Lun and en route to Hustai NP. Alternative name: Pere David's Snowfinch
144	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	145	Heard flying over on the 4th whilst in the Beautiful Mountains.
145	Olive-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>	146	A very common migrant recorded on eight days in any suitable habitat from the mountains to the desert. Often heard flying overhead too. Daily counts of 5-12 birds.
146	Water Pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	147	Six birds were seen and heard flying over on the 4th whilst birding the Beautiful Mountains.
147	Richard's Pipit	<i>Anthus richardi</i>	148	Recorded on at least four days with counts of 1-3 birds mostly in the lower lying Steppe land often in damp areas.
148	Blyth's Pipit	<i>Anthus godlewskii</i>	149	At least 15 birds recorded in the Beautiful Mountains on the 4th, mostly made up of family groups still feeding young and often calling.
149	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	150	Migrants recorded on 10 days with a max. day count of 30+ birds on the 30th.
150	Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>	151	Migrants recorded on five days with up to 10 birds on the 30th.
151	Eastern Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla tschutschensis</i>	152	Recorded only on the first day at a pool en route to DZ. Sadly not seen close enough to identify to subspecies. Both the Subsp. macronyx and Mongolian Y. Wagtail & tschutschensis occur in Mongolia.
152	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	153	Small numbers recorded on nine days. Those seen well enough were of the Subsp. baicalensis Baikal Wagtail .
153	Common Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>	154	Recorded on five days with counts of up to 8 birds at the Naran Spring on the 5th and DZ Plantation on the 7th.
154	Beautiful Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus pulcherrimus</i>	155	Good views in the Beautiful Mountains on the 4th with at least 4 birds seen well, including a male.
155	Mongolian Finch	<i>Bucanetes mongolicus</i>	156	Recorded on five days with small numbers often flying over our viewpoints whilst scanning for cats.
156	Twite	<i>Linaria flavirsotris</i>	157	Four birds on the 1st and then 20+ birds on the 3rd coming to drink in a valley within the Beautiful Mountains.
157	Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	158	At least 4 birds seen in the Manzushir Forest on the final day.
158	Meadow Bunting	<i>Emberiza cioides</i>	159	An adult and at least one juvenile seen well in Hustai NP on the evening of the 9th.
159	Pine Bunting	<i>Emberiza leucocephalos</i>	160	An immature/female bird seen well in the scope perched on top of a pine tree in the Manzushir Forest.
160	Pallas's Bunting	<i>Emberiza pallasi</i>	161	A male and at least one juvenile seen very well in DZ Plantation on the 30th.
161	Yellow-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza aureola</i>	162	At least 2 birds, both female/imm birds at the DZ Plantation on the 30th.
	MAMMALS			
1	Mongolian Marmot	<i>Marmota sibirica</i>	1	Numerous sightings at Hustai NP including both sexes and some young animals. Alternative name: Siberian Marmot . In Mongolia this species is experiencing an ongoing decline in population size, estimated at 70% over the past 10 years (Batbold 2002), due to exploitation and disease. It therefore qualifies as Endangered based on observed declines of greater than 50% over the past three generations due to exploitation. Most of its global range is in Mongolia.
2	Eurasian Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	2	Four of the dark morph form (very dark brown with pale belly) typical of this region were seen well in the Manzushir Forest on our last day.
3	Alashan Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus alashanicus</i>	3	This highly localised species is only found in two areas in the South Gobi region. At least 6 animals were seen on the 4th. It preferred the mountain foothills and meadows at higher altitudes above our base camp. Its upper altitude limit is quoted as 3,200M.
4	Pallid Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus pallidicauda</i>	4	Recorded on four days with probably the best views at Lake Khoshuu on the 1st. This species was recently split from Red-cheeked Ground Squirrel (<i>Spermophilus erythrogegens</i>) and is believed to be found only in isolated areas in Mongolia to altitudes no higher than 2,100M
5	Long-tailed Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus undulatus</i>	5	This very distinctive Ground Squirrel often quite orange in colour on the underparts was recorded on two days around the Tuul River and also in Hustai NP.

#	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	#	SPECIES NOTES
6	Siberian Jerboa	<i>Allactaga sibirica</i>	6	Seen during spotlighting sessions on at least four nights near base camp, Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park and in Hustai NP. Alternative name: Five-toed Jerboa. As with all Jerboas, good views were needed to confirm the identification, but the combination of large ears, longer than head and the tail pattern seemed to confirm the id.
7	Northern Three-toed Jerboa	<i>Dipus sagitta</i>	7	Seen well during a spotlighting session in the Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park near our accommodation. Up to 3 animals were seen and allowed close views to confirm the three hind toes and hairy feet. Alternative name: Hairy-footed Jerboa.
8	Mongolian Silver Vole	<i>Alticola semicanus</i>	8	Counts of 1-2 of these cute looking voles were seen on three days from a couple of our Snow Leopard viewpoints and whilst travelling across the highest "Green valley" above base camp.
9	Brandt's Vole	<i>Lasiopodomys brandtii</i>	9	Recorded whilst travelling between UB and DZ on the 29th and again on the return journey to UB on the 8th and en route to the Hustai NP on the 9th.
10	Midday Gerbil	<i>Meriones meridianus</i>	10	Recorded with certainty on two days when the diagnostic pale yellow claws were seen. "Gerbil sp" were recorded on another four days that could have been this or Mongolian Gerbil.
11	Mongolian Gerbil	<i>Meriones unguiculatus</i>	11	Recorded with certainty on seven days when the diagnostic all dark claws were seen. "Gerbil sp" were recorded on another four days that could have been this or Midday Gerbil.
12	Great Gerbil	<i>Rhombomys opimus</i>	12	Two of this obviously larger Gerbil were seen well in the Khongor Dunes near the Saxaul trees on the 6th..
13	Siberian Chipmunk	<i>Eutamias sibiricus</i>	13	At least 3 animals seen well whilst exploring the Manzushir Forest on our last day.
14	Desert Hamster	<i>Phodopus roborovskii</i>	14	Found in sand and semi-desert areas where we recorded a just 2 individuals during a spotlighting session in the Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park near our accommodation on the 5th.
15	Pallas's Pika	<i>Ochotona pallasii</i>	15	This species is considered to be active day and night whereas the very similar Daurian Pika is primarily crepuscular and nocturnal. Therefore all day time Pika sightings were considered to be this species and were recorded in abundance on seven days. Their alarm calls were heard daily around our cat scanning viewpoints and base camp.
16	Tolai Hare	<i>Lepus tolai</i>	16	A single animal recorded at night on the 5th and then 6 animals on the 9th of which 3 animals were seen during the day.
17	Long-eared Hedgehog	<i>Hemiechinus auritus</i>	17	One of the mammal highlights was seeing one during a night drive in the Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park near our accommodation on the 5th.
18	Daurian Hedgehog		18	A surprise find thanks to Anita's thermal image scope in Hustai NP on the evening of the 9th. Noticeably larger in size than Long-eared Hedgehog.
19	Corsac Fox	<i>Vulpes corsac</i>	19	Some very good sightings with 1 animal on the night of the 5th during a spotlighting session in the Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park near our accommodation. Plus another 3 animals at night during a spotlighting session in Hustai NP on the evening of the 9th.
20	Pallas's Cat	<i>Felis manul</i>	20	Undoubtedly, one of the tour highlights with two separate encounters during the day. The first was on the 2nd at around 7.30am and involved two animals at a range of 2Km. One animal disappeared over the ridge and then we watched the other for 30 minutes. At one point the Pallas's Cat was sat just metres from a perched Golden Eagle! The second sighting was of a large male that stared at us from behind a rock for around 30 minutes before it felt safe to move into the open. We then watched it walking and scent marking from around 5.30pm until just before 7pm at a range of only 600 metres.
21	Snow Leopard	<i>Uncia uncia</i>	21	The undoubted highlight of the tour was the sighting of a Snow Leopard for over five hours at a distance of just 300 metres. A second animal was seen briefly on arrival by some of the group. We spent the afternoon enjoying views of this beautiful cat through our telescopes. We witnessed various behaviour including, sleeping, rolling around, staring at us quite intently, changing position and flicking its tail! Those piercing pale green eyes will certainly never be forgotten! We even had our lunch brought to us by the wonderful local herders as we savoured our beautiful mountain viewpoint until dusk.
22	Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	22	Both daytime and night encounters on six days with up to 3 animals seen on one night.
23	Eurasian Wolf	<i>Canis lupus lupus</i>	23	Two different encounters with three animals. All sightings were recorded during the day and for a prolonged period of time. The first sighting was on the evening of the 3rd when a single animal gave great scope views at a range of just 600M. It was unconcerned by our presence and it was still present as we left the site at dusk. The second sighting was during the morning of the 7th. We enjoyed good scope views as both animals were watched on and off for 30 minutes from 7.45am. They were at a range of around 1,500M and allowed us to see some interaction between the two animals.
24	Marbled Polecat	<i>Vormela peregusna</i>	24	Great views during a spotlighting session near our base camp on the 2nd Sep. It was first seen from our vehicle and then we watched it on foot as it played hide and seek from a hole. After watching it for some time it finally became bored with its admirers and bounded off to hunt in the nearby long grass.
25	Przewalski's Horse	<i>Equus ferus przewalskii</i>	25	In Hustai NP you are pretty much guaranteed to see these beautiful horses and we enjoyed views of 55+ animals on the 9th including some young foals.
26	Asiatic Wild Ass	<i>Equus hemionus</i>	26	A total of 12 animals in the Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park on the 5th where we enjoyed great scope views of adults and foals. Subsp. hemionus: Mongolian Wild Ass.
27	Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	27	Small groups totalling at least 40 animals seen well in Hustai NP on the 9th.
28	Goitered Gazelle	<i>Gazella subgutturosa</i>	28	The most beautiful Gazelle species in Mongolia. We enjoyed great views in Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park of 50 animals on the 5th. Alternative name: Black-tailed Gazelle.
29	Mongolian Gazelle	<i>Procapra gutturosa</i>	29	Some impressive herds, most notably a count of 2,000+ on the Steppe near our base camp on the 31st. Smaller counts were 2 animals on the 5th, 400+ animals on the 7th and 40+ animals on the 10th.
30	Siberian Ibex	<i>Capra sibirica</i>	30	Recorded on seven days including some very impressive males. Day counts of 10 - 25 most days.
31	Argali	<i>Ovis ammon</i>	31	Three animals on the evening of the 3rd shortly before watching a Wolf and a group of 7 animals seen shortly before watching a Pallas's Cat on the 4th.

#	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	#	SPECIES NOTES
	OTHER SPECIES			
1	Siberian or Radde's Toad	<i>Bufo raddei</i>	1	Three individuals were recorded on the 6th.
2	Toad-headed Agama	<i>Phrynocephalus versicolor</i>	2	A number of this attractive reptile were recorded on three days.
3	Mongolian Racerunner	<i>Eremias argus</i>	3	Recorded only on our first day travelling between UB and DZ.
4	Multi-ocellated Racerunner	<i>Eremias multiocellata</i>	4	A single recorded at Khoshuu Lake on the 1st. Alternative Name: Central Asian Racerunner.
5	Variegated Racerunner	<i>Eremias vermiculata</i>	5	A single recorded at Khoshuu Lake on the 5th.
6	Haly's Pit Viper	<i>Gloydius halys</i>	6	This impressive snake was seen near base camp on the 2nd and the 3rd. Alternative Name: Siberian Pit Viper.
7	Adder	<i>Vipera berus</i>	7	A single was recorded on the 2nd whilst looking for Snow Leopard tracks.

Wise Birding Holidays

Bird and mammal watching tours

